


Culture of Communication of Slovak Politicians

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Abstract:

The term political culture involves a wide range of contexts and evokes a different spectrum of ideas, opinions, and definitions. Nowadays, perhaps slightly more than ever, we encounter views and statements that refer to the low level of political culture in our country. Many times, these are declarations that apply not only to specific political parties or politicians, but also to citizens, or even to the entire nation, which is (often by itself) described as having no political culture. And this notion, unfortunately, also harmfully affects the formation of our national identity as such; how we perceive ourselves, what patterns we adopt, and what standards we accept. In our paper, we focus on the culture of the Slovak political communication, while paying special attention to the linguistic utterances of selected representatives of the Slovak political scene. In this context, the language will act as a tool for communication between political representatives themselves, between political officials and citizens, but also as a tool of discussion on politics among people.

Keywords: political communication, political language, social networks, language aggression

Introduction

Recently, an adjective – toxic – has also appeared in connection with the political culture. It relates to the public speeches of politicians, their manners (especially through the media and social networks) and also to the language they use. „*Politicians present behaviour models, guides of culture or, conversely, non-cultivation by their actions (today, including the way they communicate on social networks). If the crooked ways, thus such where culture and decency are absent, have been present in the public for a long time, they can just poison society, but certainly not change it for the better. The decomposition potential of such methods is much greater than it seems at first glance,*” states Balázs (2020). The decline of political culture in Slovakia is also critically perceived by Korčok, the current Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of

the Slovak Republic, who denotes it as a long-term process. In this context, he commented on the aforementioned culture of expression by political representatives: „*I cannot call it anything else than the fact that in Slovakia, non-culture has been established in politics. It is not the responsibility of the contemporary government; however, it has not been able to suspend the long-term decline of political culture.*” (Fleischmanová, 2021). His main complaint is the way of expression, folk language, utterances and politics that arouse passions, whereas he has appealed directly to all who are involved in the politics to carefully choose vocabulary. The President of the Slovak Republic Z. Čaputová, also spoke in a similar spirit about the political culture, expressing her faith that political cultivation needs less marketing and more truthfulness and authenticity, while politicians are responsible for the tone, mood and facts in their public speeches. She gave this expression when receiving the European Prize for Political Culture in 2019.¹

Due to the fact that politics is a very large area and the relationship between language and politics is manifested in various forms and genres, we have decided to deal in more detail with the public communication of (selected) political officials on social networks – specifically on their public Facebook profiles. These, as it turned out, are not only a frequently used, but also a relatively actively monitored communication channel. As shown by a representative sociological survey conducted by the *Institute for Public Affairs* in 2016², almost half of the young respondents stated that they regularly monitor information about current events in society on the Internet and nearly a fifth of them are very keen on information about current affairs. Thus, these findings to some extent break the traditionally perceived stereotype of young people’s lack of interest and apathy in public happenings and matters relating to the politics as such. If we start from the premise that the features of the political culture³ of a particular nation or country are also presented by the public behaviour of their politicians, it is interesting to

¹ Source: SITA SR 2019

² Available at <https://www.ivo.sk/8053/sk/vyskum/mladi-ludia-v-kyberpriestore-%E2%80%93-sance-a-rizika-pre-demokraciu>

³ Several authors deal with the issue of political cultivation in our country. For all of them, we will mention, for example, I. Dulebová, who monitors the forms of contemporary Czech and Slovak political linguistics and political discourse (2011, 2012, 2013, 2017); R. Štefančík, who also devotes to the issue of the language of politics and political communication (2012, 2017, 2019) and how important societal issues in the period from the establishment of the republic to the present have influenced political communication in Slovakia; M. Gbúrová (2009) and her political-historical analysis of the amendment to the language law, where she devotes space to the role of language in politics and also analyses the meaning of language for the formation of the Slovak identity and the Slovak nation in the history.

observe what patterns of behaviour, forms of communication and models of culture or non-cultivation offer these “idols” through their public bearing.

Political communication and political language

Language and politics are interconnected and political communication can be seen as a part of interpersonal, public communication. In this case, language itself is perceived not only as a tool of political communication or propaganda, but also as the object of politics itself (Gbúrová, 2009). The way of its discourse is related to the function and intention of communication, to the forms/ways of communication and, last but not least, to the relationships between the communication participants and their social statuses. According to Klein (2010, p. 8): *„political partakers use language in public as a means of exercising power or legitimizing claim of power by producing typical texts and speeches for individual institutions, conduct political debates, shape public discussions, by means of newscasting and their own outputs they are present in the media space and they are still trying to gain approval for their positions through arguments, slogans, or appeals.“* Political institutions represent a specific type of social institutions. The purpose of each of them is to provide for the vital needs of the society. The political ones (likewise the state ones) are responsible for organizing political life and ensuring the need for security and social order (Šlosár, 2021). None of the institutions can do without a communication space, a special communication sphere, where individual communication situations, expressions and genres are formed.

The research and analysis of the political communication and political language, its means of expression stand on the border between linguistics and political science. As noted by Štefančík (2019, p. 43) *„the nature of political language is directly influenced by the environment and the officials who use the language ... the research on the political language needs to examine its role in pursuing the intentions of the political message producers as well as the target audience.“* We have come across the concept of political culture quite often in recent times, not only in professional discussions, but often also from the side of journalists or ordinary citizens. According to Eliášová (2013) political culture is represented by psychological and subjective dimensions of politics, while its overall form is conditioned by several factors. Among others, for example, the intellectual and moral levels of a human, personal, but also political behaviour of the protagonists of political happenings. As pointed out by Kusý (1997, p. 167) *„The model of*

their mutual behaviour becomes a pattern of political culture for all lower spheres of the political life in the country and is transferred to the mutual relationship between the citizen and the state.“

The notion of political culture thus represents a practical link between culture (cultivation) and politics, which is also reflected in the level of political communication. The language is often deliberately used as a political tool focused not only on persuading and promoting, but also for manipulation, disqualification, or degradation, which can already be characterized as manifestations of linguistic aggression and (not only) political uncultivation.

An interesting view on the political communication is offered by Burkhardt (1996), who interprets this concept in two levels – in a narrower and broader sense. Burkhardt’s conception of the political language includes not only the language of politicians and the media themselves, but also the importance of ordinary people’s language *„whose relationship to politics is expressed, for instance, by participation in elections, active discussions on social networks, or private discussions on political issues.*“ (Burkhardt 1996, Štefančík 2016, p. 30) In the context of our research, the second mentioned concept is especially interesting, which is about communication between politicians and citizens. He also distinguishes several areas of the political language. These private to partially official communication activities are collectively referred to as *„talking about politics“*, while this category includes discussions of ordinary people on social networks, forums, or private discussions on political topics. *„Talking about politics – private communication contains specific terms that are characteristic only to the area of politics. These are mainly terms that refer to political institutions (government, parliament, parties), or expressions about various political scandals with the intention of naming a certain phenomenon sarcastically.*“ (Štefančík, 2016, p. 31). In this context, we may talk about the so-called language/verbal registers. These are related to a certain preference of language units that communication partakers choose with regard to discourse, topic/content and method/form of communication.

Fairclough (1989) understands discourse in three dimensions, namely as text, discursive practice and socio-cultural practice. He sets the role in three different spheres: 1) as a part of social activity within practice that constitutes the so-called genres; 2) as representation that gives origin to the so-called discourses; and 3) as a way of being that constitutes various styles (e.g., style of a politician or celebrity, etc.) Such presented/interpreted/set/defined three-dimensional discourse is in relation to social structures. The texts, i.e., speech, written text, visual image or a

combination of them are produced and consumed within a specific discursive practice. It is directed by its specific rules depending on the social context, or social practice. It can be stated that discourse is managed by the so-called rules of the discourse, which are influenced by the social rules. Rules in this meaning are mediators between the text and society (Fairclough & Wodack, 1997, p. 277). In this sense, Fairclough denotes the way of constructing particular domain of the social practice and genre as a way of using language within certain social practice, for example, interview. Then discourse has an impact on the structures of society on three levels: 1) social situation; 2) social institution; and 3) society as a whole (Fairclough, 1989, p. 25).

As a part of our short research sample, we decided to focus on the language as a tool for communication between political officials and citizens – namely through statuses on the social network Facebook. The texts can be perceived in three dimensions – as language of politics, as language/verbal performance of politicians and also as language about politics. We have focused mainly on the second dimension – on the language performance of selected representatives of the Slovak political scene. We are based on the premise that the political culture and political communication include those features of social life that are directly related to political morals. As we know, the public/audience closely monitors and evaluates the behaviour of politicians, and what a given society tolerates is undoubtedly a feature of the political cultivation in a given society. In the paper, we also want to point out language aggression as a form of verbal manipulation on selected linguistic material (in the texts devoted to social-political issues). At the analysis of the texts, we were based on the principles of the critical discourse analysis, while within methodological procedures we have concentrated especially on description and interpretation. Within description we investigate linguistic signs – language performance and vocabulary. We consider in more detail features of the language aggression.

Internet as a space of interest in social-political events

As in all spheres of life, the Internet has revolutionized the field of political communication. In this perspective, it is the most modern communication channel, but due to its nature and the possibilities it offers, it gained great popularity and quickly established itself. In addition to benefits, such as, reduced costs for the entire communication, two-way course of communication, fast delivery of messages, swift feedback, etc., the Internet also allows recipients to become both consumers and producers of messages (in the form of comments, blogs, own audio recordings).

The traditional line of communication is also disrupted, where communication between institutions and their representatives took place through intermediaries – traditional media and spokespersons as mediators. Tóth (2018) denotes this process as the decentralization of communication: „*The difference between official and unofficial communication is blurred, the content of social networks is also taken over by traditional media. Statuses or tweets thus replace official opinions and video blogs are a substitute for press conferences. Not only a spokesperson but also tens or even hundreds of employees communicate on behalf of the institutions.*”

The Internet allows to address other target groups, especially young people – potential voters. As already mentioned, the survey conducted by the *Institute for Public Affairs*⁴ showed that young people are interested in current social-political events. „*Almost a half (45 %) of young people report that they regularly monitor information about current affairs in the society on the Internet, and another half (51 %) occasionally follow them. ... Nearly a fifth of young people are very keen on information about contemporary events – they spend on average more than 2 hours a day consuming them. Another quarter devotes them 1 to 2 hours and 30 % half an hour to an hour a day.*“ (Velšic, 2016, p. 2). Young men declare higher attraction than young women, while education (the higher the education, the bigger the fascination), demography (greater interest is among the inhabitants of the largest Slovak cities and the region of Bratislava, on the contrary, below-average engrossment is among young people from the smallest Slovak municipalities), or also political preferences. The civic activities of young people in cyberspace are dominated by those that can be described as rather passive – especially reading posts, opinions in discussion groups or discussion forums; liking statuses and social network posts or reading other people’s blogs. Over time, Facebook has emerged as the most used and preferred social network, and Twitter and Instagram are among the larger networks in terms of the number of users.

Despite the predominance of passive forms of civic activities among young people, the impact of Web 2.0 communication tools can be considered very strong. Social networks, such as Facebook, which allows not only mutual communication, but also the expression of sympathy or networking, provides users with the opportunity to respond and communicate directly with the candidate increasing their credibility. As it turned out, if users have a chance to engage in the

⁴ Data given in the study come from a representative sociological survey carried out within a long-term analytical-monitoring project called Digital literacy in Slovakia, which was done by the Institute for Public Affairs between August and November 2016. It is the representative qualitative poll among the citizens of the Slovak Republic aged 18-39, who use the Internet.

Internet communication, their willingness to participate in the campaign also grows (Sundar et al., 2003). Qualitative changes in the Internet environment thus create an ideal space and conditions for participation in various areas and at different levels, which is represented in the virtual world of the Internet mainly by e-Democracy.⁵ Naturally, political officials also adapted to these specifics if they wanted to be successful on social networks.

What does the situation in Slovakia look like in this context? The *Department of Communication* also deals with the analysis of data from social networks and the monitoring of the online space in Slovakia.⁶ Among other things, they follow numbers from all Facebook profiles of Slovak politicians, all sites of ministries and political parties, while creating a comprehensive and regularly updated ranking (e.g., which politicians are currently the most popular on Facebook, which ministry communicates the most appealing topics, etc.) Within the last published results, the data have been collected since 1 January 2020 on a weekly basis. Within the survey, the number of interactions (reactions, comments and shares) on individual profiles was monitored. These, naturally, cannot be perceived as the most important parameter of the success of political communication, because interactions do not automatically mean positive feedback (some of them are of course negative comments or reactions). As the authors state: *„Nevertheless, the number of interactions can be considered an important and relevant indicator of the success of communication on social networks. They not only reflect the level of feedback from voters, but they are also directly proportional to the overall impact of the contributions, thus the number of social network users affected. Last but not least, they are the only public and measurable indicator and thus represent an opportunity to comprehensively compare all political profiles.“* (Tóth, 2020). Based on these observations, the most successful politicians in terms of the number of interactions in 2020 were, as follows: Ľuboš Blaha⁷ with more than 6.5 million interactions; former Slovak Prime Minister and controversial figure in Slovak politics Igor

⁵ „e-Democracy can therefore be understood as the result of the implementation of information and communication technologies into traditional democratic processes, or in other words transferring traditional forms of democracy to its virtual shape/form. On the other hand, as a phenomenon of new processes, tools and services, which represent, for instance, blogs, discussion forums, chat boards and various other interactive elements of communication with the so-called social networks.“ (Veľšic, 2016, p. 10).

⁶ <https://katedrakomunikacie.sk/#co-robime>

⁷ PhDr. Ľuboš Blaha, PhD. Is a Slovak political scientist, philosopher and politician, who is a member of parliament – The National Council of the Slovak Republic for the party SMER – social democracy.

Matovič⁸ (approx. 6.3 million interactions) and Peter Pellegrini⁹ (approx. 5.6 million interactions). The most dominant member of the Slovak government in the Facebook area has long been Igor Matovič, where his (often controversial) contributions received thousands to tens of thousands of interactions. In this respect, he had more of them on his own profile than all the other members of the government together. What significantly helped him in this was the higher frequency of publishing posts, but probably also the confrontational style of communication and the choice of topics that significantly polarized the opinion of the society (e.g., the theme of the across-the-board testing). In the case of Instagram, the most successful politician is the President Zuzana Čaputová, who is far ahead of other Slovak politicians in this regard. She has by far the largest and strongest profile on this social network and her communication strategy makes excellent use of all the benefits of this social medium. In addition, she actively cooperates with various influencers, which significantly expands the circle of her followers and “operation”. In this respect, she has no competition among other Slovak politicians. The official profile of the President on Instagram is already followed by more than 320,000 followers; the second Igor Matovič has four times fewer followers, less than 80,000. Other leaders of the political parties move in lower tens of thousands of followers. It is obvious that the team of the President Čaputová has very well managed the work on Instagram and can very well transform political messages into the forms that are natural for this social network.

Analytical part – short research sample

As it turned out, it is a highly popular and utilized communication tool of Slovak politicians, as well as institutions, which also try to adjust to the trends in this direction. When selecting the research sample, we were inspired by the results of the research already carried out by the Department of Communication¹⁰ and we concentrated our attention on the two most successful politicians on the Facebook sites for the year 2020 – Igor Matovič and Ľuboš Blaha. Both of them reach thousands of potential voters with their communication activities and convey opinions and attitudes on the most relevant topics.

⁸ Mgr. Igor Matovič is a Slovak politician, entrepreneur and contemporary Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the Slovak Republic. He was the Prime Minister of the Government of the SR between March 2020 and April 2021.

⁹ Ing. Peter Pellegrini is a Slovak politician. In years 2018 – 2020 he was the Prime Minister of the Slovak Government.

¹⁰ <https://katedrakomunikacie.sk/kto-je-najuspesnejim-slovenskym-politikom-na-fb/>

In defining the term language aggression, we leaned on the conception of language aggression according to Petrova and Ratsiburskaya (2011, p. 76) as „a verbal expression of a negative emotional evaluation relationship to someone or something outside the ethical norm and also a satiety of the text with verbally expressed negative information, which causes information stress in the addressee.“ Language aggression can be perceived according to the visibility of the intention of the communication participant as hidden or open. In the case of open language aggression, the author of the text does not try to cover up their emotions and beliefs in any way and attacks the person who is the target of discredit with expressive words, open ridicule, and irony. In hidden language aggression, the communicator considers words, tries to act neutrally and objectively, avoids direct attacks, and bases their claims on apparent facts.

Within the analytical categories, we relied on the typology according to Gazda (2013, p. 86-92), who defines the following categories of language aggression: 1) statements with the intention of direct defamation; 2) statements that create a negative image through demonization and labelling; 3) statements disgracing an opponent (political or ideological adversary); 4) setting in an ironic context; 5) suggestive (anaphorically) factitious rhetorical questions. The choice of the researched material was intentional – these were public statuses, which the mentioned politicians posted on their profiles during one month (1 April – 30 April 2021).

In the context of methodological approaches to the study of media texts, several attitudes can be used – content analysis, (critical) discursive analysis, Franzosi’s quantitative narrative analysis (combination of content and narrative analyses), or a newer approach of the meaning analysis proposed by Miessler (2008). As part of our research probe, we decided on the method of content analysis, (with elements of discursive analysis) for two reasons: 1) content analysis allows the processing of a larger number of texts; 2) in the texts we searched for predetermined categories. We are aware that the disadvantage of content analysis is that although it enables the treatment of a large number of texts, however, the processing is rather superficial if compared to other methods mentioned. Nevertheless, for the needs of our monitoring (research probe), we considered it as sufficient.

We used several levels of coding in the content analysis of the texts. First of all, we took notice of the activity of the monitored politicians – the frequency of publishing posts and also the level of feedback they received. To some extent, this information also reflects the strength of the communication impact of the contributions. Subsequently, we categorized the posts according to

what they were focused on, into following categories: a) conveying information/content/topics; b) communicating on opinions/attitudes; c) building image (intentional and unintentional); d) everyday life (information from private life, hobbies, leisure time, etc.); e) attacking an opponent/adversary/the other party; f) persuasion/agitation. In the last phase, we monitored the occurrence and frequency of use of individual categories of language aggression in the opinion of Gazda (2013).

The published posts often included other materials (videos, recordings from press conferences, attached text documents, photographs, memes, etc.) However, we did not include them in the analysis and we focused exclusively on stylized language expression - text.

Summary of the results

Activity:

At the analysis of the collected material, we immediately noticed a significant disproportion between the published texts, not only in terms of their quantity, but also in respect to the size (length). In the period under review, I. Matovič published 42 posts on his profile, while a small part of them even consisted of contributions from other people (5). In the same time, Ľ. Blaha published 66 posts, while all of them were his own. In this regard, it may be stated that similarly to the last year, Ľ. Blaha is probably once again one of the most actively communicating Slovak politicians on Facebook. Matovič – 42 – 1.4 (37 – 1.2 contribution/day); Blaha – 66 – 2.2 contribution/day).

Range:

The size of the published text was even more striking than the level of communication activity. While the texts of I. Matovič had a range of about 66 words in the text, the texts of Ľ. Blaha seldom had less than 377 words. Due to its size (but also in terms of genre) his texts approached a commentary or a shorter blog. Naturally, this space allowed him to communicate/pass on a larger amount of content, to process a wider range of topics, to express himself more comprehensively to the selected issues.

Intensity/level of feedback:

In this respect, too, there was a very significant imbalance between the two politicians. The numbers showing the audience’s reactions are high for both, but the numbers for L. Blaha are significantly/several times higher than the figures of I. Matovič, particularly in nearly all monitored categories. (Tab. 1)

In this section we monitored the intensity of reactions from the audience, namely following:

A/ reactions through emoticons – which reflect the personal attitude of the recipient towards the contribution, its content (sometimes also the personal stance to the communicator);

B/ comments – direct feedback from the audience, but also a joint discussion of the recipients as citizens (Burkhardt’s „talking about politics “);

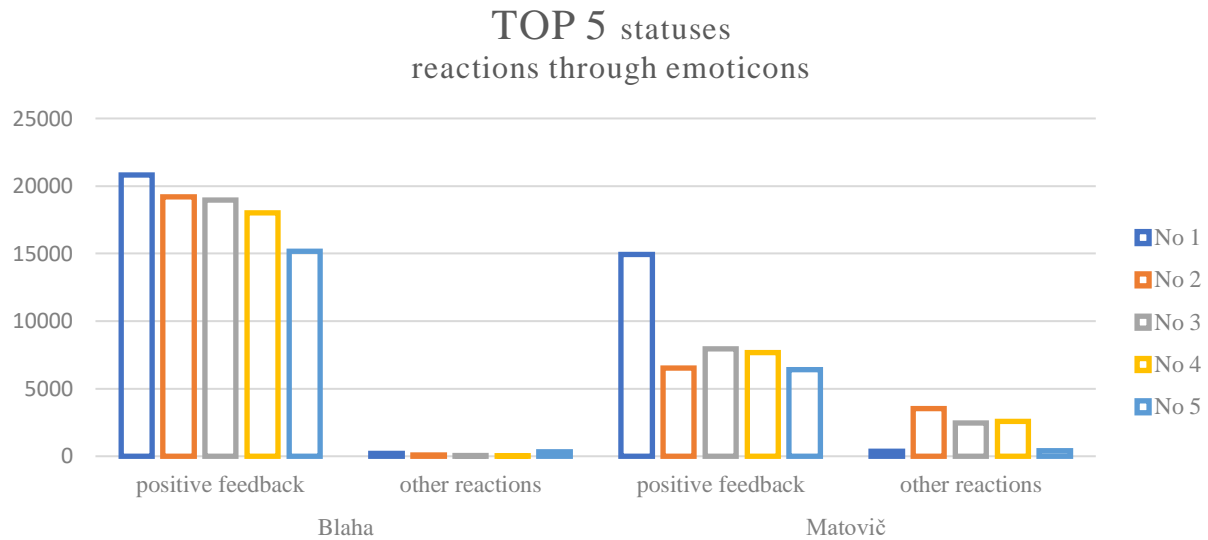
C/ sharing of the contribution – degree of participation in communication; the recipient actively and voluntarily participates in disseminating the information/message.

Table 1. Intensity of feedback on Matovič ‘s and Blaha’s profiles

	Matovič			Blaha		
	reactions	comments	shares	reactions	comments	shares
overall number	215165	36334	8775	685100	54205	129865
post on average	5815	982	237	10380	821	1968

A/The response of the audience through emoji “labels” was a relatively common form of feedback. This is understandable because it is fast and can pass on the basic reaction. It would be interesting to interpret the individual reactions in more detail depending on the degree of positivity – negativity, which they show. When interpreting the results, however, it would be difficult to estimate the level of subjectivity of the statement – given that some emoticons are difficult to interpret without knowledge of the broader context in which the recipient responded to the message (e.g., is laughing a positive reaction or is it mockery?; is anger an expression of annoyance at the writer/their person, or at the content of the post/situation which is presented? and so on). However, to a certain extent it is possible to interpret pictorial reactions of a positive nature (like, super/hard/I feel with you), which are expressions of agreement and positivity. As a matter of interest, we looked at the posts with the highest number of responses (top 5). (Figure 1)

Figure 1. TOP 5 statuses on Matovič 's and Blaha's profiles



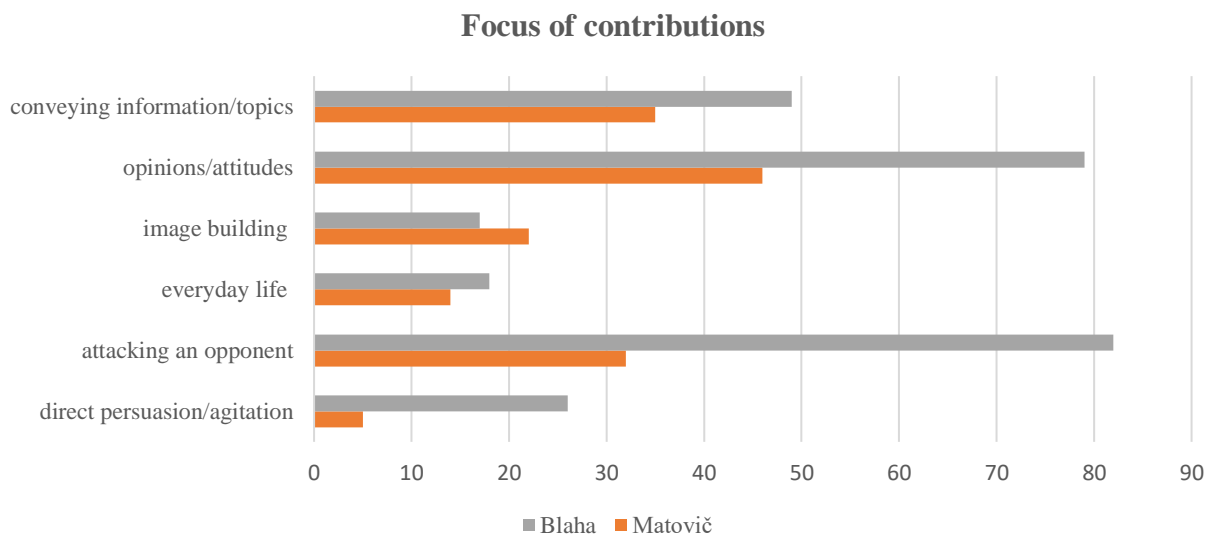
B/More intense discussion – in terms of the number of comments – was provoked by the contributions of I. Matovič. This was despite the fact that in other examined criteria his numbers were lower. In this respect, the audience reacted more actively to his posts with their own comments. The readers felt the urge to enter the communication in person and to express their views publicly. As a part of the analyses, it would certainly be interesting to follow the content of the comments in more detail – common discussion of the citizens that the posts have provoked. This in-depth analysis would be technically demanding, but it would certainly show a lot of interesting information not only about the audience's attitudes towards the content/message, or the general „mood“ of the audience. Due to the size of the group, it would be possible to monitor other topics – e.g., sociological-linguistic connection (communication bearing of the group, strategies, social and verbal cultivation of these communication forms); psychological-linguistic connection (typology of the “commentators“, forms of communication deviations, trolling) etc.

C/The data in the last monitored category (sharing of the post) are also amazing – thus to what extent the respondents felt the need to forward the message further. The extent to which respondents felt the need to participate in communication is gripping. These data also refer to the reach of the communicated/passed on message, as well as the attitude of the respondents to the content. In this respect, the communication of Ľ. Blaha was undoubtedly more successful. The figure of approximately 130,000 shares a month is surely not inconsiderable.

Focus of the contributions

Due to their focus, the posts in the vast majority of cases fell into several categories at the same time. Only a few of them really had a „pure“ form. Within the six areas that we defined (a-f), naturally, the most common category was (b) – communicating opinions/attitudes. We expected this result because it is political communication. Both politicians identically utilize the environment of Facebook posts most commonly for this purpose. Similarly, forms of persuasion/agitation could also be expected (f). which we delimited as a direct appeal to action sent towards the audience (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Focus of contributions on Matovič ‘s and Blaha‘s profiles



By both politicians, we also identified manifestations of language aggression – attacking the other party/adversary/opponent (f). However, there was a difference in the frequency of occurrence of this element. The vast majority of the posts by Ľ. Blaha contained elements of undisguised language aggression. One could say that they are built on it. Elements of agitation also appeared more frequently in his contributions. Communication of I. Matovič was also aggressively focused. These elements appeared in more than half of the posts.

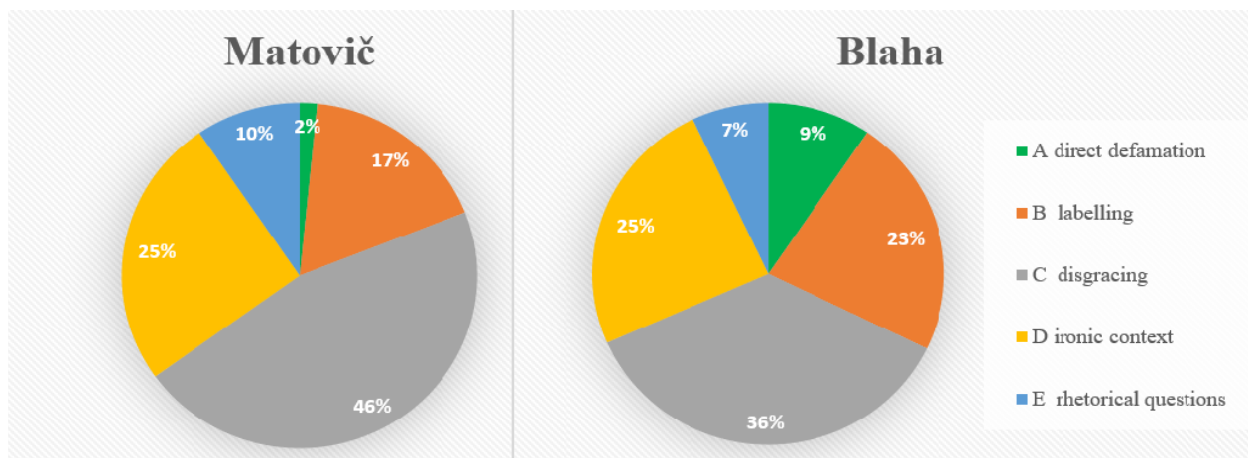
In order to inform about events/facts (a) both of them use Facebook contributions approximately in the same way. However, Ľ. Blaha does it a bit more and deals with a wider range of topics, but his communication is primarily focused differently. In the case of I. Matovič, informing was the second most important task. I. Matovič also includes more information from

his private life in his posts (c). More often, he tries to give the impression of an “ordinary” person, one of many (Note: Thanks to contributions of this type, he also becomes a subject of frequent political jokes and creative reactions from the side of the readers).

Forms of language aggression:

As the last category, we investigated the elements of language aggression (forms and quantity) that appeared in the texts. The results show (Figure 3) which means are typical of the communication expression of each of the politicians. In both cases – identically – the manifestations most often contained elements of the opponent’s dishonesty. I. Matovič as the second “weapon” uses the creation of a negative image through labelling and demonization; Ľ. Blaha, on the other hand, likes to use an ironic context.

Figure 3. Useable forms of language agitation on Matovič ‘s and Blaha‘s profiles



Based on the obtained data, it could be assumed that due to the large disproportion of the size of the texts and also the difference in the activity in adding posts by both politicians, in the case of Ľ. Blaha there will be more elements of verbal aggression present. In an effort to be more objective, we also monitored the data in relation to the range of the texts (how much % of the total number of words are elements of language aggression). We have reached a gripping conclusion in this regard. Although the results were indeed very close, slightly more elements of verbal aggression were involved in the posts by I. Matovič (7,5%), than Ľ. Blaha (6, 9%). This is an amazing finding due to the fact that Ľ. Blaha published about ten times more of the texts.

Communication performances of the examined politicians could be summarized, as follows:

- Posts of I. Matovič were rather short and concise texts, sometimes of a keyword nature. Mostly, they were focused on one problem/content, which they addressed than on a wider spectrum. In contrast, the contributions of Ľ. Blaha were in the vast majority of cases longer texts, which sounded like more compositionally complete statements. One contribution often dealt with several topics.

- Communication of I. Matovič could be characterized as a diary form of posting with elements of reportage. The contributions most often took the form of announcements and commenting news items, but he also used subjective and emotional statements. As part of verbal expression, he tries to standardize his language, however, he also likes using colloquial words (but also expressive even crude phrases) and dialect vocabulary (typical of the region he comes from). I. Matovič in his posts often publishes information from his private life. Much more than his opponent, he uses emoticons and hashtags (which sometimes act as a part of building the image). He strives for informal communication, which should look natural, spontaneous and relaxed. Communication is conducted in a monological way.

- Communication of Ľ. Blaha is very close to a publicist comment. Due to its stylistic presentation, it can also be described as a political lampoon. Most of the contributions focused on commenting, evaluating, or comparing. This makes them rather analytical than just informational texts. In his posts, he continuously addresses the entire spectrum of events that took place during the period under review. Ľ. Blaha obviously likes entertaining his audience, and he adapts his style of expression, but also the presentation of facts. He makes use of very specific, casual, but often quite substandard language (colloquial, expressive, even rude words). He has a liking for applying irony (idioms, comparisons, expressive metaphors, semantic opposites), which often borders on sarcasm (parody, antitheses). Communication is conducted in a contact style – he addresses readers, has a dialogue with them, asks questions, says goodbye to the conclusion, etc.

The culture of public speeches has an impact on the group addressee – it influences their ethical and aesthetic norms, ideas about what is good/appropriate. They also impact the strategies of their own language behaviour and affect their language taste. It is vital to set the rules. Language and culture are interconnected vessels. Cultivation of expression as the basic status of a public official (and a politician in particular) should be as self-evident, as their honesty.

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